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ABSTRACT

The paper reviews fcllowup school psychological services with handicapped and nonhandicapped students in terms of rationale, research support, and a survey of its implementation by 121 school psychologists. Followup is defined as the continued involvement of the school psychologist following the completion of the problem identification and analysis phases with an individual child. It is explained that analysis of response patterns from the surveys indicated that 76% of the psychologists said they provide followup for all or most of the students receiving psychological services; 89% use an informal followup system, typically involving the re-contact of significant individuals within the life of the child; and that annual review staffings and 3-year reevaluations were the most frequently cited formal followup systems. (CL)

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ED175221

Follow-Up on Psychological Services: State of the Art

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June 1979

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J.E.U.

FOREWORD

The concept of follow-up school psychological services is not a new or novel idea. Practitioners have been traditionally concerned regarding the effect and effectiveness of the recommendations and interventions which are developed for students they serve. The purpose of this paper, however, is to systematically review follow-up as it currently impacts within the field of school psychology. It will attempt to accomplish that review by first exploring the various rationale regarding the "why" of school psychological follow-up. Secondly, a definition of follow-up as it relates to direct interventions conducted by school psychologists will be presented, and finally, the results of a survey of existing follow-up methods used within Iowa will be reviewed. The overall intent of this material is not to exhaust the subject of school psychological follow-up, but rather to provide a catalyst for future analysis.

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RATIONALE

In addition to being a topic which contains a significant amount of face validity, there currently exist numerous reasons for follow-up to be an especially timely topic. Journal articles within the profession have spoken strongly to the importance of delivering psychological services in a way which allows for a "re-look" at the progress students make after involvement by a school psychologist. One such study which was conducted by Patricia White and Marvin Fine found a strong and positive relationship between the number of follow-up contacts a school psychologist made regarding a student and the likelihood of the child's teacher implementing the psychologist's recommendations. Additionally, the same article suggested that increased number of contacts was positively related to teachers' perceptions of student improvement and also the sense of cooperative planning between the teacher and the psychologist (White and Fine, 1976). From this study, it would be concluded the continued involvement of the school psychologist after the conclusion of the assessment and throughout the intervention phase of case contact was integrally involved with providing successful psychological interventions.

Positive benefits from follow-up contact were also found within an article by Baker (1965) which suggested that

through such contacts, teachers and school psychologists were enabled to communicate realistic expectations to each other. The results of Tyler and Fine (1974) showed that psychological consultation which allowed for "more" time (increased follow-up contact) resulted in an increase in teacher's overall satisfaction with the contact by the school psychologist.

In addition to a research basis, indications of the relative perceived importance of follow-up within the discipline of school psychology were also found within the context of statements of best practice developed by the profession. In 1975, a document entitled Guidelines For School Psychological Services was developed through the joint efforts of the Iowa Department of Public Instruction and practitioners throughout the state. That document provided recommendations to school psychologists regarding job related practices which were seen as appropriate to the profession of psychology. Included within the material was the following statement: *"The population assigned each school psychologist should allow for....follow-up with pupils, school staff and parents."* (*Guidelines, 1975*).

A second example of the inclusion of follow-up to school psychological services within documents listing factors involved in best practice in the field was in a 1979 paper entitled

"COMPENTENCIES AND STANDARDS FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT, INTERVENTION AND FOLLOW-UP." The "COMPENTENCIES" represented a series of statements which provided direction for practicing school psychologists in the provision of quality services. Competency number VII within that material stated: *"When the psychologist provides a psychological intervention, then an effective follow-up system will be utilized to assist the persons in implementing the plans and progress will be evaluated to determine the effectiveness of the intervention."* (*Grimes, Giles & Montgomery, 1979*). From the previous two sources, both of which had significant input from school psychologists in the field, it is apparent that follow-up procedures are acknowledged as playing a strong role within what is perceived by practitioners as best practice in the profession of school psychology.

It has been indicated, therefore, that the concept of follow-up has strong support both within research findings as well as documents dealing with best practice. There is however, a third area which has moved follow-up from professional best practice to a legal necessity. Recent state and federal laws have incorporated statements which require continued psychological involvement beyond assessment. Public Law 94-142 for example, in addition to other assurances, requires that assessments be made

and assurances given that efforts to educate children according to their needs be effective. It is the area of effectiveness which speaks directly to the idea of follow-up. By its very nature, effectiveness of programming can only be determined after that programming has been in place for a long enough duration to show some impact. The need to determine the nature of that impact and the effectiveness of the intervention is especially tied within legislation to the concept of an Individualized Educational Plan (I. E. P.). From the implementation of Public Law 94-142, I. E. P.s are required "before special education and related services" (Education, 1975) are provided to a child. School psychological services are defined within that law as a "related service" and therefore, the I. E. P. and its requirement for assurance of the effectiveness of contact applies directly to all school psychologists providing direct service.

In summary, it has been shown that the concept of follow-up has firm foundation from a research, best practice and legal basis. The next section of this paper will provide a working definition of follow-up as it applies to school psychological services.

DEFINITION OF FOLLOW-UP

For the remainder of this paper "follow-up" will be defined as: *the continued involvement of the school psychologist following the completion of the problem identification and analysis phases (post-assessment) with an individual child."*

Follow-up, therefore, is viewed as the dynamic process whereby intervention moves from planning into accountability. It is not, however, a written policy nor a highly regimented procedure. Just as individual children require individualized programming, so do follow-up mechanisms require sufficient flexibility to allow for the individuality of each intervention plan and the individual involved. There are, however, common factors which exist within most follow-up procedures. First, it would appear that the most common type of follow-up attempts to answer the question, *"Was the recommendation implemented?"* This type of occurrence follow-up usually takes the form of direct questioning or observation by the psychologist. Whether it is the implementation of behavior management programs, a special class placement or the miriad of other possible examples of recommendations, no child is helped through an intervention unless it is implemented. It is important to realize, however, that follow-up represents more than simply determing whether or not an intervention occurred. A second

type of question to be answered during most forms of follow-up is, *"Was the proposed and implemented recommendation successful?"* Did the projected change occur and if so, did that change reflect the magnitude of improvement planned? Certainly, this type of follow-up concern most closely mirrors the Public Law 94-142 requirement for assurance of the effectiveness of contact. It is also described in provision of pre- and post-testing. Its nature does not always demand a re-assessment however, but the utilization of standardized materials obviously would be helpful in many situations dealing with the success of interventions.

A final question which should often be posed during follow-up to school psychological services is one which attempts to answer the concern, *"Was the proposed and implemented interventions successful across settings?"* Did the child change which was found generalize from the setting in which the behavior of concern was first noticed and into settings of a different nature? If the answers to this third type of follow-up is "yes", then the likelihood of significant and lasting child change can be anticipated. It is to this end of change across settings that "best practice" documents speak and to which the greatest challenge for school psychologists exist.

In terms of a flow-chart, the three questions posed here in regards to follow-up would impact as shown in FIGURE I.

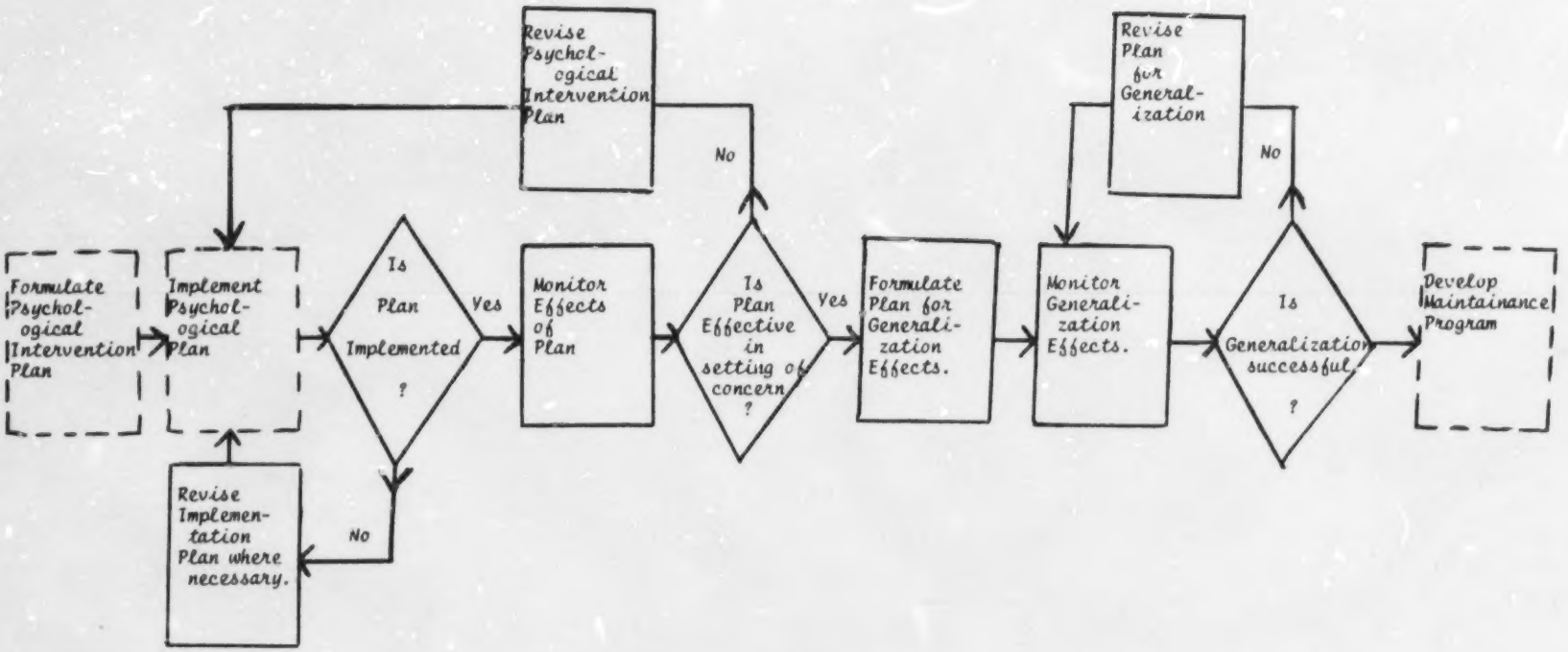

FIGURE I: FLOW CHART of FOLLOW - UP PROCEDURES

The material in solid outlines is an expansion of sections 20 and 21 of the Compentencies and Standards for Psychological Assessment, Intervention and Follow-up and would assume the existence of all previous sections of that document. As can be seen, those added follow-up steps are viewed as existing in a hierarchical manner. No plan for psychological intervention can succeed unless it is tried, nor can it generalize unless it is found to be successful in the referral situation.

EXISTING FOLLOW-UP

During early May, 1979, a blanket survey was conducted to determine the types and degree to which formal and informal follow-up systems were being used by school psychologists within the state of Iowa (see Appendix A for a copy of the survey and cover letter). Three hundred and fifty-four surveys were mailed to psychologists who were included within the 1978-1979 Iowa Department of Public Instruction listing of school psychologists.

Results

One hundred and twenty-one surveys were completed and returned for tabulation. That number represented a return rate of thirty-four percent (34%). Respondents were found to be distributed throughout the state of Iowa, with the range of returns from each Area Education Agency being from three to twenty surveys.

Analysis of response patterns within the returns showed one hundred and twenty scoreable responses to the first question regarding follow-up (question number 3). That item asked, *"Do you currently provide follow-up with all or most of the students receiving psychological services?"* Of the surveys returned, ninety-one or seventy-six percent of the responses indicated *"Yes"*, such follow-up was provided. The remaining twenty-eight stated follow-up was not currently done with all or most of the served students.

The next question, *"Do you use an informal follow-up system?"* received one hundred and twenty-one responses. One hundred and eight of those answers indicated *"Yes"*, an informal follow-up system was employed (89%). The remaining thirteen responses indicated that no informal systems were used. One hundred and eighty-eight narrative responses were obtained to the second portion of the question which asked for a description of the *"...procedures, methods, approaches or systems..."* which were used in informal follow-up. Table 1 lists the results of that question.

Types of informal follow-up	Frequency
Teacher conferences	69
Parent conferences	29
Direct child contact/observation	27
Conference with School Administration	19
List children at a future date in personal calendar	8
Conference with School Counselor	7
Re-staffings	6
Client log (monitoring sheet)	6
File system	1
Other	4

Table 1: Procedures listed as informal follow-up methods and the frequency of those responses.

In reviewing those narrative answers, it was evident that two types of information were gained in response to that open ended question. The first type of information was descriptive of activities or actions done by psychologists in conducting follow-up. Those answers were seen as including conferences with the child's teacher (N=69); parent (N=29); school administrator (N=19); and school counselor (N=7). Other responses describing actions typically taken during informal follow-up procedures included direct contact or observation of the child (N=27) as well as re-staffings (N=6). A second type of narrative answer also given to the last portion of question four, however, was found to be descriptive of methods or techniques formulated to simplify the mechanism of informal follow-up. The first example of such a facilitating procedure was suggested within the responses of eight school psychologists responding to the survey. They indicated that at the conclusion of their evaluation of a child they would list that child's name within their personal date book or calendar at some future date. On that date the psychologist would therefore be reminded to implement whatever follow-up was deemed appropriate.

The second most frequently indicated mechanism developed to implify follow-up was the "client log" or monitoring sheet (N=6).

Although the actual format of those logs varied significantly within the returns, a sample is included within Appendix B. As can be seen, that specific form (provided by AEA 7) had numerous organizational and record keeping uses. Of significance to the topic of follow-up, however, was the inclusion of columns entitled "Follow-up Date and By Whom" and "Follow-up Completed". It would appear by maintaining such a log of the disposition of each case, a school psychologist would be able to determine when follow-up should be conducted.

The final type of mechanism for facilitating follow-up was suggested by Delores Van Deveer of AEA 9. Her follow-up system was built around a filing system which compartmentalized the school year by months. At the conclusion of her assessment of a child she would insert a card with the child's name and other pertinent data, (i.e. questions to be answered during follow-up, contact persons, etc.), reflecting his/her special program into the month segment in which she wished to conduct her follow-up. Retreival of the names of children to be followed-up during any given month was then accomplished by pulling the cards stored in that months segment within the file.

Question number five on the survey of follow-up to school psychological services asked, "*Do you use a formal follow-*

up system?" One hundred and sixteen school psychologists responded to that item. Of that total eighty-six responded *"No"* they did not use a formalized system (74%). The remaining thirty responses indicated *"Yes"*, they did use such a formalized system.

Table number two shows the types of formalized systems described within the narrative section of question number five as well as the frequency of those responses.

Types of formal follow-up	Frequency
Annual Review Staffings	12
Three-year Re-evaluations	7
Staffing form notation	3
AEA follow-up form	3
Other	7

Table 2: Procedures listed as formal follow-up methods and the frequency of those responses.

A total of thirty-two narrative responses were received. The first and second most frequently cited examples of formal follow-up systems were Annual Review Staffings (N=12) and Three-year Re-evaluations (N=7).

The third type of follow-up mechanism suggested allowed the capacity to speak directly to school psychological services through notation on an AEA staffing form. Appendix C contains an example of such a notation (see heading X). The particular form (from AEA 3) is one of a number different AEA forms currently being used within Iowa which require that follow-up be routinely condisered during any child's staffing.

A final type of formal follow-up procedure suggested within the narrative responses to question number five was follow-up which was designed to occur at a designated interval following a child's staffing or parent conference. An example of a letter used in such a procedure (both English and Spanish versions) can be found in Appendix D. That form, which was developed by Malinda Thielman of AEA 9, allowed parents the opportunity to feed back information on a number of topics such as: their understanding of the information shared with them during the staffing; whether or not the recommendations made during the staffing were being tried and if the suggestions had been helpful.

The final question included on the survey regarding follow-up was whether or not the respondents felt the topic of follow-up on psychological services should receive more attention in the future. Of a total of one hundred and sixteen answers, one hundred and five (91%) indicated "Yes" more attention should be given to the topic. The remaining eleven suggested it should

not receive additional attention. Twenty-five narrative responses were included to that item. Table number three describes the nature of those narrative response and their frequency.

Response	Frequency
I am too busy now/need time	15
Not if it leads to more paperwork	3
Follow-up essential to job role	3
Other	4

Table 3: Narrative responses regarding the need for more attention to follow-up and the frequency of those responses.

The most frequent narrative response to whether or not follow-up should receive more attention in the future suggested that fifteen of the school psychologists responding to the survey felt they were too busy in their current role to seriously expand it into follow-up. Three other psychologists responded in a somewhat similar vein by indicating a concern that follow-up procedures might develop into unnecessary additional paperwork rather than to services to children. The final narrative response was provided by three psychologists responding to the survey. They stated clearly their recognition of the essential nature of follow-up to quality school psychological services.

DISCUSSION

From the results of this survey, it would appear that school psychologists within Iowa perceive themselves as conducting follow-up to school psychological services at a relatively high rate. The primary mechanism for follow-up was indicated as informal in nature and typically involving the re-contact of significant individuals within the life of the child evaluated. A number of mechanisms were included in the responses to the survey. Although differing in specific aspects, they all appeared to hold the potential for facilitating that informal follow-up.

Formalized systems were found to be used less frequently. Examples included within the survey results provided first, a means to assign follow-up responsibility within a staffing and secondly, an example of a letter to gain written feedback from a child's parents regarding school psychological services. A third type of activity offered as a mechanism of formalized follow-up reflected means to conduct general program reviews (annual review staffings and third year re-evaluations). It is the writer's opinion that to include those activities within mechanisms of follow-up to school psychological services is to seriously limit the role of school psychologists. There appears to be an ever increasing tie between school psychological services and special programming in general. It is of significant concern that school psychologists might equate an aspect of their professional role with a system developed not to maximize the effectiveness of psychological

services, but rather for special education program or placement review. Although the necessity for additional school psychological services is a logical and necessary topic to be discussed within both annual and third year activities, effective school psychological follow-up needs to be child specific - not program specific. That specificity needs to be both in its content as well as in the time interval prior to implementation. It also must be designed to address both children who enter special programs as well as those children never seriously considered for placement. Additionally, from the survey results, school psychological follow-up also needs to be practical in nature with limited paperwork requirements.

CONCLUSION

No form or procedure can assure quality psychological follow-up or services in general. Obviously, due to the wide diversity of delivery systems as well as individual case concerns, no mechanism can truly be all things to all situations. It is important however, that each of us - as school psychologists - become even more actively involved in learning the effects of the interventions we provide. It is only through that endeavor will we be able to maximize our assistance to the children we serve.

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APPENDICES

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Iowa
a place to grow

ROBERT D. BENTON, Ed.D., STATE SUPERINTENDENT
David H. Bechtel, M. S., Administrative Assistant
JAMES E. MITCHELL, Ph.D., DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT

May 4, 1979

Dear colleagues in school psychology:

School psychology in Iowa has improved in quality in many ways over the last five years. One of the components of quality is the use of a follow-up system to determine the changes that have (or have not) resulted from providing psychological services. We want to collect some information concerning the types and degree to which formal and informal follow-up systems are being used by psychologists.

Please complete the enclosed survey and send a copy of any forms or procedures you use in collecting or tabulating your follow-up data. The survey information will be used in a publication planned for Fall of 1979.

Complete and return the survey by May 15 to:

Joe Ulman
Supervisor, Psychological Services
Spirit Lake High School
South Hill Avenue
Spirit Lake, Iowa 51360

Thank you for your assistance!

Sincerely,

PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES BRANCH
SPECIAL EDUCATION DIVISION

Jeff Grimes, Consultant
School Psychological Services

Joe Ulman
Supervisor, Psychological Services
Spirit Lake High School
South Hill Avenue
Spirit Lake, Iowa 51360

JG/jld
Enclosure

FOLLOW-UP SYSTEMS USED BY SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

Please complete and return by May 15, 1979 to:

Joe Ulman
Supervisor, Psychological Services
Spirit Lake High School
South Hill Avenue
Spirit Lake, Iowa 51360

1. Name _____

2. AEA # _____

3. Do you currently provide follow-up with all or most of the students receiving psychological servcies?

_____ Yes _____ No

4. Do you use an informal follow-up system?

_____ Yes _____ No

If yes, please describe the procedures, methods, approaches or systems you use and provide materials, if any, used in this effort.

5. Do you use a formal follow-up system?

_____ Yes _____ No

If yes, please describe the procedures, methods, approaches or system you use and provide material, if any, used in this effort.

6. Do you feel follow-up on psychological services is an area which should receive more attention in the future?

_____ Yes _____ No

APPENDIX B: CLIENT LOG

SCHOOL:

Follow-up completed											
Follow-up Date & by Whom											
Placement Made and/or Other Recommend.											
Staffing Report signed by parent											
Place-ment indi-cated by Coord.											
Staffing Report back from Coord.											
Staffing Report dictated											
Classroom Ob-jectives written											
Staffing Held (Date)											
Staffing Notices Sent (Yes-No)											
Staffing Set											
Staffing Needed (Yes-No)											
Date Dictated											
Date Seen											
Gd.											
Age											
Name											
File No.											

APPENDIX C: STAFFING FORM FOLLOW-UP

Identified Needs-Continued

Long Range Goals-Continued

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____ _____

VI. VERIFICATION OF HANDICAPPING CONDITION (Check):

___Communication Disability, ___Hearing Impaired, ___Emotional Disability, ___Learning Disability, ___Mental Disability, ___Physical Disability, ___Visually Impaired, ___Multiple Handicap (Requiring intensive special education programs and services).

VII. CONSIDERATION OF LEAST RESTRICTIVE PROGRAMMING OPTIONS: (Refer to Page 17 in the Mental Disabilities Service Handbook)

COMMENTS:

VIII. RECOMMENDED PROGRAMMING: _____

LOCATION: _____

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR FACILITATING AND IMPLEMENTING RECOMMENDATIONS:

_____

IX. PARENT REVIEW, CERTIFIED LETTER, AND PARENT WAIVER/PERMISSION COMPLETED BY:

_____

The Special Education Placement Requirement Form must be completed prior to student placement in any Special Education Instructional Program. The student's case manager will assume responsibility for coordinating prompt completion of all requirements and returning the completed form to the Director of Special Education. The Director of Special Education or delegee will notify the appropriate school officials of the finalized placement approval.

X. PROJECTED FOLLOW-UP DATE: _____

FACILITATOR: _____

XI. A minority report for contested programming should be in written form and directed to the Director of Special Education.

XII. COPIES OF THE FULL STAFFING FORM TO BE DISTRIBUTED BY THE RECORDER TO THE FOLLOWING:

Local School Administrator
Director of Special Education
Case Manager
Receiving Teacher
Sending School Superintendent
Others as recommended by members of the staffing team

_____

_____

XIII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

APPENDIX D: ENGLISH and SPANISH FOLLOW-UP Letters

mississippi bend AEA

1422 Houser St., Muscatine, Iowa, 52761

Dr. Clark A. Stevens, Administrator

Harold R. Bridges, Co-ordinator

Area Education Agency - Muscatine Service Center

319/263-8476

Dear Parent,

Recently I had the opportunity to serve your child _____. It will help me to do my job better if you will complete and return these questions. Just mark one statement in each pair below. Your help will be appreciated.

_____
Malinda Thielman, School Psychologist

1). _____ The explanation of test results was clear.
_____ I would like additional information on the test results.

2). _____ The recommendations were clear.
_____ I would like additional information on the recommendations.

3). _____ The recommendations were practical considering our family/school situation and we are trying them.
_____ We are trying the recommendations but having problems with them, and would like to talk with you about this.
_____ We found the recommendations just don't fit into our family/school situation and are not following them; we'd like to talk with you about more practical/possible recommendations.

4). _____ Even though we are trying the recommendations, we see little or no improvement.

5). _____ New problems relating to our child's development, learning, or behavior have come up; we'd like to talk with you.

I (we) will be available for a phone call at _____(number) at the following times:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
A.M.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
P.M.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

mississippi
Area Education Agency
Dr. Vernon L. Vance, Director
Division of Special Education

Estimados Padres,

Recientemente tuve la oportunidad de servir su hijo/hija _____. Me ayudara hacer mejor mi empleo si terminaran y volvieran estas preguntas. Solo marquen una contestacion en cada par.

_____
Psicologo de la escuela

1). _____ La explicacion de examen fue clarificada.
_____ Me gustaría más informacion sobre los resultados del examen.

2). Las recomendaciones fueron claras.
_____ Me gustaría más información sobre las recomendaciones.

3). _____ Las recomendaciones fueron practicamente considerando nuestra situacion familiar/escolar y estamos tratándolas.
_____ Estamos tratando las recomendaciones pero tenemos problemas con ellas, y desearíamos hablar con usted sobre esto.
_____ Encontramos que las recomendaciones no se aplica a nuestra situación familiar/escolar y no estamos haciéndolas; desearíamos habler con usted sobre más recomendaciones practica/posibles.

4). _____ Aunque tratamos las recomendaciones, vemos muy poco o no progreso.

5). _____ Nuevas problemas que se relacionan con el desarollo de nuestros hijos, aprendiendo, o en el conportamiento han venido, nos gustaría hablar con usted.

Si fuera posible desearíamos una llamada telefonica al _____ (numero) a las horas siguientes.

	lunes	martes	miércoles	jueves	viernes
AM	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
PM	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____